



## *Our Dogs and Transport*

This month I would like to cover the topic of transporting our dogs safely.

We all know when flying our dogs anywhere, that a portable crate meeting IATA (International Air Transport Association) standards must be used. I want to bring the

transport issue closer to home, that is, road transport.

Whether taking your dog, or dogs, to a conformation show, obedience trial, or just a quick drive to a local park or beach, it is important that certain practices be put in place for the safety of your animals, yourself and any other people travelling our roads.

In NSW we should all be aware of the rules and regulations covering transport of animals in our cars. There is legislation in place, and to comply with the safety standards does not require a huge effort, or great expense, to ensure you and your animals remain safe.

The Roads and Maritime Services of NSW advise that the Police can fine a driver and issue demerit points if an animal is causing the driver to not be in full control of the vehicle, or if they are driving with a dog on their lap.

Currently the penalty is 3 demerit points and \$425 fine. If the offence occurs in a School Zone, the penalty is higher.

Animals must be either seated or housed in an appropriate area of the car. 'Seated' animals require securing, via a harness, and 'housed' animals must be in a travel crate with the crate positioned to minimise excessive movement within the vehicle. Caution should be exercised when having your animals 'seated' in a harness. Be mindful where Airbags are installed, as in the event of an accident, serious injury or death of your animal could occur, if they are positioned too close to a deploying Airbag. Animals must not be transported in the boot of a car!

The RSPCA have the power to issue fines if an animal is injured in a car accident and it is proven the animal was not securely seated or housed within the car. An unrestrained animal that is injured in an accident could result in the owner being fined up to \$5,500 and up to 6 months gaol. Further consideration should also be given to satisfying requirements of the vehicle insurer(s) when transporting animals.

Transporting dogs in purpose built trailers is a safe form of road transport. Regularly check the bearings and tyres (and brakes if fitted), couplings and lights between use. Avoid loading objects in the compartments that could cause injury to animals in the trailer.

Check that air flow is sufficient to prevent overheating, or that air conditioning is working properly. Take time to exercise your animals regularly when you take a break from driving. This will maximise comfortable travel for you both.

Every consideration should be given to your animal's safety when transporting them. Complacency could be the worst decision of your life.

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